

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, August 22. 1693.

Quest. 1.

Teach me, kind *Athens*, how to scape a *Sin*
Which fain I wou'd, but weak is my *Endeavour*:
So irresistibly she draws me in,
I think it *Heaven* to shun, yet think it *Heav'n* to have her.

2.

This fair *Perverter* is another's right,
Long since espous'd with *Nuptial Vows* and *Foys*,
To one so strangely fond, his *Soul's Delight*
Dwelis wholly on the *Musick* of her *Voice*.

3.

Yet she, *ungratefull*, all his *Love* denies,
Disdains his tender *Conjugal Caresses*;
And but because it is a *Mode of Vice*,
She least affects that which she most possesses.

4.

I blush to say't — 'tis me alone she loves,
By *Artless Methods* she reveal'd her *Flame*:
I hear what're the fair *Deluder* moves,
And fighting with I might *Confess* the same.

5.

By *Heav'n* I Love the *Syren* more than *Life*,
And yet I know it is a *Crime* to Love her:
Fain I'd declare the *Duty* of a *Wife*,
But want both *Words* and *Courage* to reprove her.

6.

O teach me, *Athens*! to be bold and great,
Help me to get my *Reason* up in *Arms*:
I would collect my self and rule my *Fate*,
Be true to *Heaven*, and stupid to her *Charms*?

Ans. 1.

Your self must help your self to avoid a *Sin*,
Which if you wou'd, more strong be your *Endeavour*!
She may entice, but cannot force you in:
O think it *Heav'n* to shun, and think it *Hell* to have her.

2.

What is more *Sacred* than another's right?
What stronger *Ties* than *Nuptial Vows* and *Foys*?
Then curb that furious torrent of *Delight*
Which her *Eyes* give, and fly her *Syrens Voice*!

3.

For Love of *Heav'n* her *Lawless Love* despise!
Like *Serpents* twine, flye her unchast *Caresses*:
Be virtuous still, tho' still the *Mode* is *Vice*,
Nor ravish what another yet possesses.

4.

Keep but thy *Modesty*, in vain she Loves!
Keep *Virtues* last and strongest *Barrier*, *Shame*!
But never hear what the false *Charmer* moves,
Each Word will fan the *Spark* to a raging *Flame*.

5.

If her you love, it must be more than *Life*;
'Tis *Sin*, 'tis *Shame*, 'tis *Death*, 'tis *Hell* to love her:
Fly far, O fly the *Syren* of a *Wife*,
And at safe distance, if at all, reprove her.

6.

How happy were we, cou'd our humble *Verse*
The *Sparks* of dying *Virtue* in thee raise!
Nay, round the World the *Noble Flame* disperse,
We *Civil Garlands* ask, and wear who will the *Bays*.

Quest. 2.

One thing is needfull, 10th. St. Luke.

A PINDARIC.

1.

With what *unweary'd Diligence*
Mortals their secular Affairs pursue!

With what hard *Tasks* and *Disappointments* they dispence,
And with fresh *Vigour* their *Attempte* renew!

If Riches be their Aim,

Tho' *Nature*, conscious of the banefull *Fruit*

Which springs from that accursed root,

Strive to conceal the same

At the dark *Center* of the *Earth*,

Or at the bottom of the *Sea*,

They digg, they plunge, they dive, from thence to fetch
(them forth,
With indefatigable *Industry*.

Nor with less eager *Zeal* is *Honour* sought,

Honour, that gilded *Idol* of the *Great*,

For which, how do th' *Ambitious* toyl and sweat,

And think't with any *Peril* cheaply bought;

Hurry'd with strong desire brook no delay

By what're *Obstacles* withstood,

With an impetuous fury force their way,

And to the gaudy *Trifle* wade thro' *Seas* of *Blood*.

2.

But if the *Scene* be chang'd, and *Holy things* appear,
How wretchedly indifferent they are!

Tho' told of *Immortality*,

Celestial Crowns, endless *Felicity*,

Joys everlasting, unallay'd with *Pain*;

They're still unmov'd, as if all this

Were but imaginary *Bliss*,

The *Day-dreams* of some *Melancholly Brain*.

But if but *Title* or *Disease*

Their *Bodies* or *Estates* molest,

They cannot rest

'Till *Lawyers* and *Physicians* they consult,

Bear patiently with *Naucious Potions* and large *Fees*,

In *Hopes* at last to have of all a good *result*;

The while their *Souls*, those *Sparks* of *Heavenly Fire*,

Neglected, may expire;

Or quite neglected, or allow'd but slender *Care*,

Perhaps a scanty *Alms*, or yawning *Pray'r*,

Put up with *Heart* aloof, and feeble *Breath*;

Cold as their *Zeal* is the *Devotion* they afford,

As if they fear'd,

Like him who call'd on *Death*,

They shou'd too soon be heard,

And the too easie *Deity* shou'd take 'em at their *Word*.

3.

Say then, *Athenians*! how it comes to pass

That Men are thus perversely wise?

Why real *Ills* so readily embrace,

Substantial Good despise?

What is it thus insatiablest loſt *Mankind*,

Who for such empty *Joys* as these

Strain all their *Pow'rs* and all their *Faculties*,

Which *Heav'n* has for far Nobler *Ends* design'd?

Thus amongst *Maidens* once great *Peleus Heir*

Abjectly sculkt, in *Virgin-Robes* conceal'd,

Barely to shun the *Dangers* of the *Field*, (prepar'd.

While the *Greek* *Youths* more brave for the *Campaign*

But when by wise *Ulysses* tartly school'd,

The *Convict Hero* strait

Blush'd at th' *inglorious* mean *Retreat*,

And by his sage *Advices* over-rul'd,

In order to reverse

His former *Infamy*,

To the fam'd *Siege* he goes,

And mighty *Deeds* he does,

Deeds, as *Immortal* as the *Verses*

In which the *Grecian Bard* embalm'd his *Memory*.

4.

Such Noble *Converts*, *Athens*! might your *Muse*

Bring in — write then, and with just *Satyrs* rage

Lash this *unthinking Age*.

(choose?

What larger *Theme* than *Universal Frenzy* can you

Besides,

Besides, the Virtue's greater to explode
A Vice, when 'tis most worn, and most in Mode.
And, O! how worth your while, if you
Shou'd *profelyte*, tho' but a *few*!
Some *generous Souls*, toucht with a just remorse
May think upon a *wiser Course*;
This having fix'd upon,
Resolv'dly fall on, (by force.
And with Praise-worthy *Violence storm*, and take Heav'n

Answer.

1.
Yes! yet once more! ye *Muses*! yet once more!
Ye *Hills*, ye *Plains*, ye *Fountains* which belong
To all th' *insipid*, the *tunefull Throng*,
Smit with the *Love of Virtue* and of *Song*,
We'll gladly trace you o're:
Tho' barren all your *Fields*, and bare
As is the *Land of Famine* and *Despair*,
Which those who see can scarce believe
What from *Tradition* they or *Books* receive;
That a *Mecenas* or *Augustus* once were there,
Tho' *Scorn* and *Laughter*, (ah were that the worst!)
From those who, with but *little Cause*, for *Envy* burst;
Or are inrag'd that we some *Grains of Incense* bring
('Tis all we have) to *God*, or to our *King*;
Tho' these be all the *Laurels* we must gain, (pain,
Our *Countrey's* kind *Reward* for all our well-meant
We'll still go on, and wage *Eternal War* with *Vice*:
There grows a *beautiful Herb* in *Paradise*,
Which the *first hour* we thither go
Will make us quite forget this *World of Woe*:
And when our *wearry Limbs* shall rest
We ask no *Tombs* on our kind *Mothers Breast*,
This all the *Pomp*, this all the *Cost* we crave,
This all the *Monument* we'd have,
May *Virtuous Lovers* strow *sweet Roses* o're our *Grave*.

2.
Goddess! proceed in thy auspicious Choice,
" And make the *Hills* around reflect the *Image* of thy *Voice*.
Nor thy high *Birth* let low *Ambition* wrong,
Nor *Earth-born Wealth* usurp thy *heavenly Song*:
Let the vain *World* themselves, unenvy'd, cheat,
Be miserably rich, and miserably great;
While, Goddess! we remain retir'd with thee,
Happy in no *dishonest Poverty*:
With *Gold* and *Greatness* still at odds,
With *Fortune*, whom so many *Fools* preferr'd,
'Tis hard to scape among the *Herd*,
And all the *Stygian Gods*.
Yet can we that *Unkindness* bless
Which *sow'd* us into *Happiness*:
Others we'll warn, our selves deceiv'd no more;
The furious *Tempest* laid the *Winds* blown o're,
We'll bless the *Storm* that drove us to so fair a *Shore*:
Each fatal *Sand* and *Rock* we'll now describe,
Here *Scylla* stands, a numerous *barking Tribe*;
There lurks *Charybdis*, whose vast *Gulf* might save
Ev'n *Natures* self th' *Expences* of a *Grave*.

3.
What *Beauties* are there in a Well ribb'd *Chest*?
What *Charms* in *Interest* upon *Interest*?
Say *Miser*! say! will that imprison'd *Gold*
Preserve thee from a *Fevers Rage*,
Or prop the slow *Decays of Age*,
Or fence thee from the *Cold*?
No more thou givest it leave to shine
Than when 'twas bury'd in its *Native Mine*;
Unless a *Bait* which now and then shows fair
To *Angle* in some unexperienc'd *Heir*:
The *Bait* expos'd, the *Hook* thou dost not show,
Close as the *Guardian Fiends* below:
But when he's struck, altho' he *founce* and *rave*,
Dost troll him on from *Wave* to *Wave*;
Till all his *Blood* and *Vigour* gone,
He *struggles* now no more,
But to his *Fate*, by his torn *Intrails* drawn,
Lyes *gasping* on the *Shore*.
While thou great *Mammon* dost devoutly thank,
For still encreasing thy *exhaustless Bank*;

And like old *Morecraft*, if thou canst afford
To Match thy *Daughter* to some *hungry Lord*,
Desie the *Widdows Tears* and *Orphans Cry*,
Loaden with *Earth* canst *Heaven* and *Hell* desie,
And still in *peaceable Damnation dye*.

4.
Mythinks we hear our *Enemy-Gold* complain
We that alone unjustly blame,
Since wild *Ambition*, and hot *Thirst of Fame*:
Where *Gold* its *Thousands*, has *ten thousands slain*:
Nor shall it scape, we'll pull the *Serpent* down,
Tho' ramping high it boasts a *gawdy Diadem* and *Crown*:
A *Bloody Banner*, waving high
With *Golden-Flow'r-de-Lis's* charg'd,
Which soon it hopes, its *Conquests* o're this *Earth* enlarg'd,
To see display'd against the *Skie*:
How great its *Pomp*, how vast its *Guards* appear,
Murder, *Confusion*, *Treason*, *Guilt* and *Fear*,
With a long *Train of Mischiefs* in the *Rear*:
O're *heaps of gasping Carcasses* they go,
Sackt Cities their *Triumphant Colours* show,
Fair *Hydelberg* in *Flames* the last of all the row:
This is *Ambition*, those who this *desire*,
Who to ill-gotten *Fame* aspire,
Must wade to *Hell* thro' *Seas of Blood* and *Fire*.
Ah who for this wou'd fondly lose
Those *Joys* which round fair *Virtues Temples* shine,
Which *Saints* possess, which *Angels* chule,
So clean, so sweet, so temperate, so *Divine*!
Fain wou'd we *Sing*, and in a loftier strain,
Invite the *World* to such a *Bliss*,
But ah! too great, the *Adventure* is,
The *Lark* may *tour* a-while, but must descend again.
See the *wing'd Courser* droop and *Sweat*!
He cannot hold another *Heat*,
But pants i'th' *Airy Plain*.

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